

A
SERMON
 ON THE
Sin of Stealing Custom,
 AND THE
Duty of Paying Tribute :
 From the 13. Rom. 7. v.

Preached at St. Peter's Exon :
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Διὰ τί γὰρ, ΦΙΛΙ, Φόβος διδομεν ; ἢ ὡς προϊσταμένῳ μιᾶς τε-
 λόντες κηδεμονίας ; καίτοιγε ἢ ἂν ἐτελέσαμεν εἰ μὴ ἐξ ἀ-
 χῆς ἐγνώμεν ὅτι κερδαίνομεν ἐκ τῆς τοιαύτης ἐπισκοπίας.
Chrysost. Hom. 13. Rom.

Majores nostri ideo copiis omnibus abundabant, quia Deo Decimas
 dabant & Cæsari Censum reddebant. Apud August. Tom. 10.
 Hom. 48.

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ROM. 13 Chap. 7 Ver.

*Render to all their Dues,
Tribute to whom Tribute,
Custom to whom Custom.*

AMONG many other Things, with which the Enemies of Christianity aspers'd those who profess'd that pure and holy Religion; this was one, that they were of implacable and turbulent Spirits, and Enemies to the Civil Government: For they not complying with the Heathenish Customs of Swearing by the Emperor's Genius, Sacrificing for their Safety, and Worshipping of them as Deities, were represented as Enemies to *Cæsar*; and their Religion and Principles as destructive of Government. Therefore, the Apostles, that they might

B

wipe

Wash. T. Honey 11/12/14 (m)

wipe off this Asperſion, and that the Powers then in being, might not have any jealousie of Chriſtianity, as an Enemy to their Authority and Power, took frequent occasions to inforce the Duty of Subjection to it, and of being Conſcientious in the Payment of thoſe Tributes and Cuſtoms, which were required for the Support of it, as we find in the Text.

Render to all their Dues, Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Cuſtom to whom Cuſtom.

In diſcourſing on which words,

1. I ſhall ſhew what is meant by Tribute and Cuſtom.

2. I ſhall conſider the Nature of the Command, which enjoins the Payment of theſe Things.

3. I ſhall ſhew the Opinion of ſome Eminent Divines, concerning the Obligation of this Precept.

Laſtly,

Lastly, I shall conclude with a brief Application.

1. To shew what is meant by Tribute and Custom.

And hereby I understand the Legal Taxes which are appointed for the Support of the Government, under which we live, and enjoy Protection and Safety.

Non modò Portoria & indictiones, sed alios quoque redditus. Calv.

But some are more Critical in the Explanation of the words, and they tell us, That Custom, denotes the Tax laid upon Trade ; and Tribute, that which is laid on the Persons or Estates of Men. To the like purpose, *Beza*, and others, explain these words, That Tribute is a Pollrate, Custom what is payable upon any other account.

Vestigalia pro mercibus dantur, Tributa pro solo & capite. Grot.

And having shew'd what is meant by Tribute and Custom. I come in the

Φόρος dicitur Tributum quod in capita civium imponitur :

Φόρος quicquid alio Nomine solvitur: *Beza* : Strigel. Aret. Gerhard.

2d. Place; to consider the Nature of the Command, which enjoins the Payment of these Things.

Est injustum quod Naturæ Societatis repugnat. Grot.

And here it will appear, that this is one of the Moral Laws, and of universal Obligation. Because

1. It hath its foundation in the Nature of Things, being a most necessary Means for the common Safety. The great Principle, or Law of Nature, is the Welfare and Happiness of Mankind, and whatever is necessary to this, we are oblig'd to it by the Law of Nature.

Prima justitia
est in Deum:
Secunda in
Patriam:
Amb. Lib. 1.
de off.

Vestig. &
Tribut. veluti
firmamento
Respub. Niti-
tur. Bodi. de
Repub. li. 6.
p. 1028.

Nec quies
Gentium sine
armis, nec ar-
ma sine sti-
pendiis, nec
stipendia sine
Tributis ha-
beri possunt.
Tacit.

Now there is nothing more necessary to the Happiness of Mankind than Govern-
ment. But Government cannot subsist, and
the common Peace cannot be preserv'd,
without a Power and Force to defend us a-
gainst the Enemies of it. And this Power
cannot be maintain'd without Tributes and
Customs ; and hence it is evident, the Pay-
ment of them becomes due by the Law of
Nature. And the very Heathens were not
so blinded with Avarice as we are ; and by the
Light of Nature they were convinced of the
Necessity of this Duty, and the Obligations
we

we are under for the Practice of it. *Cicero* Ailes Tribute the Support of War, and the Sinews of the Common-Wealth. And *Mennenius Agrippa* in *Levie* declares, inevitable Ruine must needs follow the denying of Tribute for the Support of Government. But

Subsidium Belli & Nervus reipub. Orat. pro Manl. Tributis Magistratibus denegatis, extremam Reip. perniciem impendere. Liv. Lib. 7. p. 78.

2. The Apostle, in the Verse before the Text, saith, *That Governours are God's Ministers, attending continually on that very Thing.* That is, they spend their Time and their Strength for the Good of the Common-Wealth: they undergo great Care and Trouble; are expos'd to great Hazards and Dangers, that we may enjoy the Comforts of this Life, and sit quiet under our Vines and our Fig-trees. And for this cause, saith the Apostle, *pay you Tribute also;* and in the Text, *Render, therefore, Tribute to whom Tribute is due.* So that the Apostle inferring this Duty from the consideration of the Industry and Diligence, the Care and Trouble, which Governours undergo in the discharge of their Office, it is an Act of Commutative

Magistratus Gravissimas curas & Labores pro subditorum incolumitate sustinet, æquum est ut qualicunque mercedis loco Tributa persolvantur. Ger. de Magist. Pol. p. 921.

Tributum non gratuum sed Reddendum Patrii & Defensionis. Freher. Dissert.

mutative Justice ; and upon this account, as well as that before mentioned, it is a part of the Law of Nature, and by which all Men are oblig'd. And of this Nature

*Suum quod
Magistratui
jubemur da-
re, sunt Obe-
dientia in Li-
citis & Ho-
nestis, Reve-
rentia & Ti-
mor pro ipso
& Tributa,
& Vectigalia
chemnit.Loc.
Theo. pars 3.
p. 231.*

3. It will appear to be, because it is, a proof of our Subjection to the Govern-ment, under which we live. It is by the Apostle conjoined with the Precepts for Subjection, mentioned in the former Verses, and the denying of this Tribute disowns the Authority, by which it is enjoined. So that if Subjection to Government be a moral Duty, this must needs be so too.

And having shew'd, that the Duty in the Text is a Branch of the Law of Nature, I proceed in the

3d. Place, to shew what the Opinion of the most eminent Divines, both Ancient and Modern, hath been concerning the Obligation of this Precept, whether it bind the Conscience for paying those Tributes and Customs, which are imposed by Law or not.

Justin

Justin Martyr, who liv'd so nigh the Apostles, that he was stiled one of their Disciples, in his *Apology* to the Emperor *Antoninus*, doth not only mention the peaceable Subjection of the Christians to the Emperor, their constant prayers for his Health, and the Prosperity of the Government, but also their conscientious paying of the Tribute, for the Support of the Empire, and this as oblig'd to it by the command of Christ, *To render to Caesar the things that are Caesars.*

Not long after this, another Apology was written for the Christians by *Tertullian*: and he saith, they paid the Tribute, with the same Fidelity, with which they abstain'd from all Frauds, thereby declaring it was as much against their consciences to be guilty of publick as private Frauds.

And St. *Ambrose*, (or whoever was the Author of those Commentaries on the Epistle to the *Romans*, which go under his Name) speaking of the reason why St. *Paul* commands the paying of Tribute before Honour, saith, *Quia Major Causa aut major*

necessitas

φέρεις δὲ καὶ
 εἰς φερὰς
 τοῖς ὑψι-
 μων τεταγ-
 μένοις παν-
 ταχὺ πρὸ
 πάντων πε-
 ράμειν φε-
 ρεῖν, &c.
 Orat. Ad.
 Ant.

Vestigialia
gratias Christi-
aniani agunt
ex fide de-
pendentibus.
Debitum,
quod alieno
fraudando
abstinemus.
Tert. Apol.
Sect. 42. p. 72.

Bel. &c. a-
scribe them
to Hil. Diac.
Tom. 5. p.
232.

necessitas, Because there is greater Reason or greater Necessity for it. The legal Revenue is the Strength and Sinews of the Government; and the with-holding of this, weakens it, and exposeth it to contempt: It tends to make a Prince a Beggar. This is, therefore, of greater moment, than giving to Kings bended Knees, or pompous Titles; these, without the other, are little better than Mockery or Scorn; little better than the Soldiers honouring of Christ, when they bended the Knee, and said, *Hail King of the Jews*.

But I proceed to consider the Opinion of some Modern Divines, who liv'd since the Reformation, and who have greater Authority with some than more ancient Writers; and therefore, I shall give you some account of them, both Foreign and of our Church and Nation.

Vestigialia &
Tributa per-
solvant, &c.
non quia Co-
gimur, sed
quia Deo
gratum est
obsequium.
Calv. Rom.
13. 7. v.

Calvin speaks plainly for it in his Commentary on the Text, he joins this with other Duties to be perform'd to our Governours, not by compulsion, but as an acceptable Service to God.

Peter

Peter Martyr, who came into *England*, and was highly instrumental in our Reformation, speaking of the paying Tributes legally impos'd, admires, *Quo Jure & ratione*, Loc. com. p. 307. by what Law, or upon what account, any can think themselves exempted from it.

Arctius, in his Common Places, hath a p. 877. large Tract on this Subject; and he proves, by many Arguments, that Men ought to pay the Tributes and Customs by lawful Authority imposed on them, and this not *propter Iram*, for fear of the Penalty of the Law, *sed ut conscientiae satisfaciamus coram Deo*, that we may keep a good conscience towards God.

The same may be found in the Works of *Episcopus*, who fully answers the Objections that can be made to exempt the consciences of Men from the Obligation of this Precept. Episc. quest. 28. p. 26, 27.

I might have given you large Citations from *Grotius*, *Gerhard*, *Philip of Limburg*, but I am confined to narrow Limits, and must hasten to give an account of the Judgment of some learned Divines, of our own Church and Nation.

Duct. Dubit.
Lib. 3. p. 125.

The learned Bishop *Taylor*, in his Discourse of Laws Penal and Tributary, is plain in this case. *Tribute*, saith he, *is due by the Laws of Religion, where it is due by the Laws of the Nation.* And, therefore, those Persons are very regardless of their *Eternal Interest*, who thinks it lawful Prize whatever they can take from the *Custom-House*, &c.

Let no Man think that, because some Subjects Farm the Customs, and that the Portion which is concealed, doth not lessen the Incomes of the Prince, therefore it may be Lawful to hide from them all they can. For the Farmer hath what he gets in the right of the Prince, and in his own right he hath nothing from the Subject, but from his Supreme who is therefore bound to defend that Right, and complain of that Wrong.
And

And the Husband-Men in the Gospel, who denied to pay the Stewards of the King the Fruits of the Vineyard, which in their King's Right were demanded of them, were cast into utter Darknes.

And Mr. Baxter proposeth this case, when an Estate is intrusted with a Friend, to secure it from paying great Taxes or Tribute to the King, whether a Man may keep such a Trust? and he answereth, He may not, the Taxes being Just and Legal for the maintenance of the Magistrate, or the preservation of the Common-Wealth.

Christi Direct. part 4.
p. 164.

Now that the Non-payment of the Tribute and Customs, appointed by the Law, is an Offence, some will not deny; but they think it hard that such Offences should be ranked with Robberies and Thefts. But, though this Practice may be no Theft, in a Law sense, that having not declared it Felony; yet, in a Scripture sense, it is no better: and for this, I could produce many Divines of great Note, who have ranked this

among the Sins forbidden by the Eighth Commandment.

Mr. Dod, in the Exposition of that Command, hath these Words :

For things pertaining to the Common-Wealth, that is another kind of publick Robbery; when Men that have the disposing and ordering of things, that pertain to the Common-Weal, and are to be used for the common Good, will take them to themselves, and make a private Gain of them: this is a foul Fault, and a high Degree of Theft, so much the more heinous, because it is the more general, and greater wrong by how much it toucheth more.

In res singu-
lorum majus
est dominium
regis ad bo-
num commu-
ne quam do-
minorum sin-
gularium:
Grot. de Ju.
Bel. & Pa.
Lib. 1. c. 1.
Sect. 6.

And Dr. Towersen, in his Explication of the Eighth Commandment, saith :

In as much as the Public is capable of a Property, as well as private Persons, in as much as it is not only capable of a Property, but cannot subsist without it; hence it comes to pass, there may be a theft of public Goods, as well as private; and consequently that, as well as the other, to be

be concluded within the Force of the Prohibition.

And from hence it will follow, saith that Learned and Pious Doctor :

‘ That denying just Tributes, are Encroachments upon the Goods of the Public, and consequently proper Thefts.

And he afterwards affirms, That
‘ As the Mischief which ariseth from public Thefts, is much greater than that of private ones, consequently they are much more criminal.

Chemnitius, amongst the Sins forbidden by this Command, reckons the Offence which the *Romans* called *Peculatus*, and which he defines to be a Robbing of the Commonwealth, by with-holding, or not paying what is due to it.

Peculatus.
Furtum quod
committitur
in Repub. vel
subtrahendo
vel non per-
solvendo res
communita-
tis. Loci.
Theol. pars
2. p. 81.

To these, I shall only add the Judgment of two Reverend Prelates, both once well known

known and esteemed in this City, Bishop Hall, I mean, and Bishop Hopkins.

Bishop Hall's
Remains,
page 348

The first, in his Irrefragable Propositions, affirms :

‘ That no Prejudice of another Man’s Right can be so dangerous and sinful, as that Prejudice which is done to the Right of Public and Sovereign Authority.

page 75

And the other, in his Exposition of the Lord’s Prayer, declares :

‘ That he, who detaineth any thing, which the Sentence of the Law adjudgeth to another, is guilty of Theft and Robbery.

And thus I have laid before you the Opinion of some eminent Writers, among many others that might be mentioned.

These Authorities, I hope, will be sufficient, especially since there is not any Protestant Author of the contrary Opinion. And though a few of the Romish Casuists may be

Vide Amadæum Guimenium, p.
70

be of another Judgment, this I think will give little Reputation to the Cause, and as little ease to a Protestant Conscience; For these are the Men who have affirmed it is Lawful to Steal in Necessity; that Servants may Steal from their Masters, when they think their Wages is not sufficient for their Labour, and have published other Opinions, so impious, that they were condemned as Pernicious and Scandalous by Pope *Innocent* the Eleventh, and his Cardinals.

Vid. Decret.
Inno. 2do.
Mart. 1679.
& Prop. 36,
37.

Now this matter, as most wherein the Consciences of Men are concerned, may be consider'd with respect to many particular Cases: As what Men may be oblig'd to, when the Tributes impos'd are excessive, and carry no proportion to the end for which they are given; as also, when we are certain they will be misapplied, not to the Advantage and Preservation, but the Ruine of those that pay them.

But I omit the consideration of these, and the like cases, in which we are not concern'd, that I may answer some Popular Objections
that

that are made in Defence of the Non-payment of what the Law requires of us.

And one is grounded upon an obscure place of Scripture, and the Precept of the Text being plain, that ought not to be objected, but understood agreeably to it: However, I will briefly consider it. And the place is in the 17. cap. of St. *Matth.* from the 24. v. to the end.

V. 24,

They that came to receive the Tribute Money, came to Peter, and said, Doth your Master pay Tribute?

V. 25,

He saith, Yes. And when they came into the House, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the Kings of the Earth take Custom or Tribute, of their own Children, or of Strangers?

V. 26,

Peter saith unto him, Of Strangers. Jesus saith unto him, then are the Children free.

V. 27.

Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go to the Sea, and cast an Hook, and take up the Fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his Mouth, thou shalt find a piece of
of

of Money, that take, and give unto them for thee and me.

Now there is a great Controversy among learned Men, What is meant by this Tribute, whether it was the half Shekel that was paid to the Temple, or some other Tribute exacted by the *Roman* Emperor: Whatsoever it were, it matters not much to the purpose, for which it was objected. Christ only mentions a Priviledg he might claim for himself and his Domesticks, as he was the Son of God. And I never heard of any that objected this Scripture, as exempting Men from paying just and legal Tributes, but the Pope and his Clergy, and the *German* Anabaptists. And several of the Fathers, were so far from thinking this place would justify the with-holding of Tribute, that they inforce the Payment of it from this very Passage.

And there is as little weight in another Popular Objection, as in this, That the Laws enjoyning Tribute are Penal, and the Suffer-

Si censum
Dei filius sol-
vit quis tu
tantus es, qui
non putes esse
solvendum.
Ambr.

Redite quæ
sunt Cæsaris
Cæsari, id est,
Nummum
Tributum,
Sc. quomo-
do ipse red-
didit Tributa
pro se & Pe-
tro. Hier. in
Loc.

Lex penal
eo sine lata
est ut metu
penae Subdi-
ti cogantur
ad officium.
Dr. Sand.
Prælect. 18.
p. 313.

Homo im-
probus ac-
que immani
verecordia
Aul. Gel.
Noct. Ar. p.
608.

ing of the Penalty, when inflicted, satisfies the Law. For Penalties are annexed to secure Obedience to Laws, and cannot justify us in the Breach of them. And therefore, when *Lucius Neratius* gave every one he met a Box on the Ear, and withal, paid to every one Twenty Five Asles, which was the Penalty imposed by the Law of the Twelve Tables; He was, notwithstanding this, judged to be a most vile and wicked Person. And this being a Duty, by the express Command of the Law of God, as well as that of Nature, it is absurd to imagine, the Obligation to it can be taken off by Suffering the Penalty annexed by a Humane Law.

I come now to the APPLICATION,
the

Last Thing Promised.

1. To those who have Transgressed this Command in the Text, by injuring the King,

King, in with-holding what by Law and Right belongs unto him.

2. To those who have not been guilty of these public Frauds, but have conscientiously rendered to *Cæsar the things that are Cæsars*, as well as to God, the things that are Gods. And

Last. To those who are concerned in receiving these Tributes in the Text, or are in any Place or Office, by which they are intrusted with any part of the Public Revenue.

1. To those who have transgress'd this Command in the Text, injuring their King and their Country, by with-holding what is given by Law for their Security and Support.

Bishop *Latimer*, a famous Prelate and Martyr of our Church, in his Sermon, on

p. 206.

those words, *Render to Caesar the things that are Caesars*, affirms, the King hath as good right to what is given by Parliament, as to any Inheritance; stiles those Thieves who with-hold it; and denounceth the Damnation of Hell against them. And this Doctrin had such influence upon his Auditors, that several Hundred Pounds were brought to him for Restitution of Wrongs, of this Nature, done to the King, and which he faithfully paid to the Exchequer.

p. 113.

And though I have small hopes, this weak Discourse should have the same Success, yet I must do my Duty, and leave the Success to God, and your own Consciences.

If the Public be capable of a Property, if the King have as true a Right to what is given by Law, as a Private Man, to what he enjoys by Inheritance or Purchase, then have we the same obligation, to make Restitution for public as private Frauds.

Let, therefore, the Necessity of Restitution, be applied, to engage to the one as well as the other. If in this we are defective,

Non

Non

Non agitur Pœnitentia sed Fingitur, we do not practice Repentance, but dissemble and counterfeit it: all is but as the Sackcloth of *Ahab*, and the disfigured Face of a Pharisee. When we have done wrong to any one, we do not truly repent, unless we undo it as much as possibly we can, and set the injur'd Person in the same condition we found him. Our Saviour saith, *We must bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; *Fructum Congruum*, Fruit which is Congruous, or agreeable to Repentance, and amendment of Life. Now when a Man hath wrong'd another by Oppression or Fraud, if he have unfeigned sorrow for this, a hatred and abhorrence of his past Injustice, is it Congruous, is it Agreeable to this, to keep what is unjustly gotten? To declaim against the Temptation, and yet keep the Bait by which it prevailed; to confess wherein we have Injured the King, and not (to use the Prophet's Words) *give again what we have Robbed*, are not these Matters Incongruous? Are they not contrary, and plainly inconsistent one with another? We
 should

should, therefore, consider, that, unless we testify the truth of our Repentance, by making Restitution for Injuries of all kinds, we cannot expect that God will be reconciled to us: When God is reconciled, the Curse is removed, and all that he hath is sanctified to him. Such a one, as *Moses* expresseth it, is
 Deut. 28. 3. *blest in the City, and blest in the Field, the Fruit of his Ground, and the Increase of his Kine, the Flocks, and the Sheep, the Basket, and the Store, all is Blest.* But it is not thus, when ill gotten Goods are not restored, when our Basket is filled by Fraud, and our Store is the Fruit of Robbery. A Curse, and not a Blessing, always cleaves to ill gotten Wealth, and makes that of *Solomon* infallibly true,
 Pro. 16. 8. *That better is a little with Righteousness, than great Revenues without right.* For there is a Woe denounced against him, who encreaseth that which is not his own. So that if we keep that, to which we have no just Title, Trade with it, and Gain by it, there is a Curse goes with the Principal and Interest too: *It enters* (as another Prophet saith)
 Zech. 5. 4. *into*

into the House, remains in the midst of it, and consumes it, with the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof. A Curse cleaves to ill gotten Goods, it is most surely intail'd to the Estate, and descends with it from Generation to Generation, and is not to be cut off but by Restitution.

And till we restore these Earthly Things to which we have no Right and Title, we can have no right to the invaluable Riches of the other Life, as well as the Blessings of this.

This is plain from what we read of *Zacchæus*, the Publican, who (as was usual with Men of that Employment) had been guilty of great Injustice, and against the Emperor, in all likelihood, as well as private Persons. And when our Saviour went to his House, he spake not one word of comfort to him, till he declared the sincerity of his Repentance to him, by a full and ample restitution: *Behold, half of my Goods I give to the Poor; and if I have taken any thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him*
four-

St. Luke 19.
cap. 8. 9. v.

fourfold. Then, and not till then, Christ saith, *This Day is Salvation come to thine House.*

Now let us not think, that those only who are guilty of private Frauds, are under these great and weighty Obligations to Restitution.

Can we think, that God will punish those who wrong the meanest Man, and not be avenged on those who do the same to his Vice-gerents ? Their Royal Dignity highly aggravates the Violence that is done to their Persons ; and so it doth the Injustice that is done to their Property. And therefore, in the Parable, with the Killing of the Heir, our Saviour joins the Seising his Inheritance, as next to it in guilt.

2. As to those who have not been guilty of these Public Frauds, but have conscientiously *Rendered to Cæsar the things that are Cæsars*, as well as to God, *the things that are God's*: Let such consider their happy Condition, and be ever careful to keep their *Consciences void of Offence, both towards God, and towards Man.*

Restitution is one of the most difficult Duties of Religion, and Men are very hardly perswaded to perform it sincerely and fully; and therefore, happy are they who are not by any unjust Practices under any obligation to it.

When, therefore, you have opportunity to enrich your selves by public as well as private Frauds, consider if you use the Opportunity, and do the Wrong, all must be restored, or you are undone for ever.

E

And

2 Ep. 2. 9.

And when the Approaches of Death and Eternity shall awaken your Consciences, with what Horror will you reflect upon your former Injustice and Dishonesty? How will those words of St. Peter terrify an Unjust Man, That he reserveth such to the Day of Judgment to be punished. And it will not be an easie matter so to make Restitution for Injuries, as to quiet our Consciences, there being difficult Cases, by which the mind of Man may be perplexed and disturbed. But Just and Honest Dealing, the excellent Rule to Render to Caesar the Things that are Caesars, as well as to God, the things that are God's, is a plain, an open, and safe way to Heaven. And it is the highest Madness to put our selves in that Condition, in which our way to Heaven will be full of Difficulty, Perplexity, and Trouble.

Consider how it was with *Judas*, when he had received the Wages of Unrighteousness, he had no quietness in his mind, and in Horror he restor'd it to those from whom he received it. And the like remorse and anguish of mind, will seize upon us, if we heap up Wealth, by the like or any other unjust or evil Practices. Of this *Solomon* hath given us fair Warning: *Bread of Deceit is sweet to a Man, but afterwards his mouth shall be fill'd with Gravel.* The meaning is, Men please themselves at first with the successful Arts of Fraud and Injustice: But when their Consciences shall be awakened, Remorse and Horror will seize upon them, and all their Pleasure will be turned into Sorrow and Trouble. In this case, Men are like those in a Surfeit, nothing will give ease, but the Vomitting up the Load that lies upon them. And what a vain Thing is it for a Man to lay those Loads on his Conscience, under which he can have no ease till he Disgorge, by discharging himself

PRO. 10. 17.

self of the ill gotten Gain, which if kept, will be but a Moth to consume what is honestly gotten; and for which we must also account before the Tribunal of Christ in another World.

Last. What hath been said concerning the Obligation that lies upon us, for the paying of just and legal Tributes, for the Support of the Government, and the Public Peace, should also be considered by all those who are concerned in the receiving of these Tributes, and who are in any Place or Office, by which they are intrusted, with any part of the Public Revenue. When these Men are not content with their competent Stipends, and Enrich themselves by misapplying the public Treasure intrusted with them; this is a greater Offence than that before mentioned. It is not only high Injustice, and, in a Scripture sense, Robbery, but Treachery; and, if by Oath they are obliged to be faithful, it is Perjury

jury too. Yet such there have been in all Ages; and this made Cato complain, *A.Gel.p.352.*
Fures privatorum furtorum in Neruo atq;
in Compedibus etatem agunt, Fures Publici
in Auro atq; in Purpura. Those who Rob private Men, live in Chains and Fetters, but those who Rob the Public, brave it in Gold and Purple.

These are the great Pests of a Common-Wealth, more mischievous than those who Rob by Day or Night. The Roman State was raised to its Height and Glory, under such Men as *Fabricius* and *Scipio*, who studied to Enrich their Country, and were contented to be Poor themselves. And the want of this Public Spirit to keep Men from Preying on the Revenue of the Kingdom, is a more fearful Præfage of Ruine, than any Monstrous Births or Blazing Stars.

Dent tales
 Reges, tales
 Judices, tales
 debitorum
 redditores, &
 exactores ipsi
 Fisci, quales
 præcepit esse doctrina
 christiana. August. ep. 5.
 ad Marel.

From

(38)

*From these Pests GOD of
his Mercy preserve us, and
send us always such as Mo-
ses sat over Israel.*

**Men fearing God, and
hating Covetousness.**

F I N I S.

